

any improper actions by management are dealt with swiftly and accordingly. The confidence in the GSEs has a direct impact on the stability of the American economy. The American people and the markets must have confidence in the operations of the congressionally chartered Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

We need to build upon legislation that several of my colleagues and I introduced last year. The Senate Banking Committee passed a watered down version of our legislation, but it is clear from OFHEO's findings that it is not adequate. To prevent these serious actions from occurring, the new GSE regulator must have at a minimum the same powers and resources as those of other financial regulators such as the Federal Reserve System, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

House Banking Subcommittee Chairman RICHARD BAKER has scheduled a hearing next week to examine the problems at Fannie Mae. There are still too many unanswered questions and I look forward to seeing the results of the House hearing. Given the frequency of the accounting problems, pattern of manipulation and questionable management actions at both Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, Congress can no longer look the other way.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF AMERICA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to note that this evening the House of Representatives has considered and passed legislation that Senator HATCH and I introduced together to reauthorize and expand the Department of Justice grant program for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. I thank Senator HATCH for his longtime commitment to our bipartisan legislation and thank the 46 Senators from both sides of the aisle who are cosponsors of our legislation to support the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

I pay special thanks to House Judiciary Committee Chairman SENSENBRENNER and Ranking Member CONYERS for their leadership and commitment to shepherding this bill through the House and sending it to the President's desk for enactment into law.

Too often the public sees Republicans and Democrats disagreeing. But when it comes to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America there is no doubt that we see eye to eye: This bill shows the unified support of Republicans and Democrats for the good works of Boys & Girls Clubs across the Nation.

Children are the future of our country, and we have a responsibility to make sure they are safe and secure. I know firsthand how well Boys & Girls Clubs work and what topnotch organizations they are. When I was a prosecutor in Vermont, I was convinced of the great need for Boys & Girls Clubs because we rarely encountered children

from these kinds of programs. In fact, after I became a U.S. Senator, a police chief was such a big fan that he asked me to help fund a Boys & Girls Club in his district rather than helping him get a couple more police officers.

In Vermont, Boys & Girls Clubs have succeeded in preventing crime and supporting our children. The first club was established in Burlington 62 years ago. Now we have 20 club sites operating throughout the State in Addison, Chittenden, Orange, Rutland, Washington, Windham and Windsor Counties. There are also four new Boys & Girls Clubs in the works in Winooski, Brattleboro, Barre and Vergennes. These clubs will serve well over 10,000 kids statewide.

As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I have pushed for more Federal funding for Boys & Girls Clubs. Since 1998, Congress has increased Federal support for Boys & Girls Clubs from \$20 million to \$80 million in this year. Due in large part to this increase in funding, there now exist 3,300 Boys & Girls Clubs in all 50 States serving more than 3.6 million young people. Because of these successes, I was both surprised and disappointed to see that the President requested a reduction of \$20 million for fiscal year 2005. That request will leave thousands of children and their clubs behind and we cannot allow such a thing to happen.

In the 107th Congress, Senator HATCH and I worked together to pass the 21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act, which included a provision to reauthorize Justice Department grants to establish new Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide. By authorizing \$80 million in DOJ grants for each of the fiscal years through 2005, we sought to establish 1,200 additional Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide. This was to bring the number of Boys & Girls Clubs to 4,000, serving no less than 5 million young people.

The bill the House will pass today builds upon this: We authorize Justice Department grants at \$80 million for fiscal year 2006, \$85 million for fiscal year 2007, \$90 million for fiscal year 2008, \$95 million for fiscal year 2009 and \$100 million for fiscal year 2010 to Boys & Girls Clubs to help establish 1,500 additional Boys & Girls Clubs across the Nation with the goal of having 5,000 Boys & Girls Clubs in operation by December 31, 2010.

If we had a Boys & Girls Club in every community, prosecutors in our country would have a lot less work to do because of the values that are being instilled in children from the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Each time I visit a club in Vermont, I am approached by parents, educators, teachers, grandparents and law enforcement officers who tell me "Keep doing this! These clubs give our children the chance to grow up free of drugs, gangs and crime."

You cannot argue that these are just Democratic or Republican ideas, or

conservative or liberal ideas—they are simply good sense ideas. We need safe havens where our youth—the future of our country—can learn and grow up free from the influences of drugs, gangs and crime. That is why Boys & Girls Clubs are so important to our children.

I look forward to the President signing into law as soon as possible our bipartisan bill to expand Federal support for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Our country's strength and ultimate success lies with our children. Our greatest responsibility is to help them inhabit this century the best way possible and we can help do that by supporting the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

AGRICULTURE DISASTER FUNDING

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the agricultural disaster assistance package that was included in the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations bill. Many farmers and ranchers in my home State of South Dakota are suffering from their third, fourth and even fifth year of drought. As House and Senate differences are reconciled, I urge the conferees to retain the important disaster provisions that were approved on such a wide bipartisan basis in the Senate.

The drought provisions I supported, along with Senator DASCHLE, will help farmers and ranchers survive a severe drought. While I would have hoped producers wouldn't be faced with a choice for assistance for either 2003 or 2004, I understand that money is short in these times of soaring budget deficits. The Senate disaster assistance plan will provide almost \$2.9 billion to farmers and ranchers across the country who are suffering from agricultural disaster. The \$475 million for the Livestock Assistance Program, in addition to the \$2.464 billion for the Crop Disaster Program, are critical to my State.

This drought package was introduced by my colleagues, Senator BAUCUS and Senator BURNS, and with the help of Senator DASCHLE it was added as an amendment to the fiscal year 2005 Homeland Security funding bill by a voice vote. A voice vote reflects the overwhelming bipartisan support this drought aid package has. It is frustrating that there are members of the House majority party who would reduce or even eliminate disaster aid funding for ailing farmers and ranchers, or choose to gut other crucial agricultural programs to pay for this necessary assistance.

In 2002, Senator DASCHLE and I proposed a \$6 billion drought package, which was opposed by the President and some Members of the House. That package was pared down to \$3 billion before its passage. The current package is very similar to the package that was approved for the 2001–2002 drought. Thanks to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, including Senator DASCHLE's efforts to secure an opportunity to address this issue, we have a